

## Clarification Guidance

This attachment provides policy clarification and additional guidance for travel and access designations for the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) travel management planning process.

### **Designation Process Requirements**

This clarification applies specifically to the second paragraph of the Recreation Section of the Land Use Planning Handbook 1601-1 (Release 1-1667, 11/22/00-Appendix C.II.C.1.), which states:

**“...All OHV designations, including road and trail designations or redesignations (see 43 CFR 8340.0-8 and 8342.2), must be made through the land use planning process described in 43 CFR 1600. OHV designations should be reviewed periodically to assure that the resource objectives are being met (see 43 CFR 8342.3).”**

To ensure consistent implementation of this guidance during land use plan development, revision or amendment, all Field Offices must complete the following steps:

1. Include OHV designation decisions for all public lands in the planning area in all Resource Management Plans (RMPs). All public lands must be designated as “open, limited or closed.” Criteria for open, limited and closed **area** designations are established in 43 CFR 8340.0-5, (f) (g) and (h) respectively. Other existing law, proclamation, regulation or executive order may limit the use of the open area designation or impose additional requirements relating to OHV use in specific circumstances. Include a map of all area designations.
2. Include selection of a travel management network in the limited areas that can be completed during the development of an RMP. Establish a process to identify specific roads and trails that will be available for public use, and to specify limitations placed on use. Products from this process will include:
  - A map of roads and trails open for OHV use.
  - Definitions and additional limitations for specific roads and trails (defined in 43 CFR 8340.0-5 (g)).
  - Criteria developed to set parameters, to select or reject specific roads and trails in the final network, and to specify limitations.

Examples of these criteria might include: desired future conditions for access, important destinations or roads or trails critical for particular activities, road and trail density or location criteria, goals related to conservation of visual resources, or sensitive habitat management.
  - Guidelines for management, monitoring and maintenance of the limited area or sub-area road and trail system.

Guidelines might include items such as: seasonal limitations, vehicle type and size restrictions, and road construction and maintenance standards.
  - Indicators to guide future plan maintenance, amendments or revisions related to OHV area designations or the approved road and trail system within limited areas or sub-areas.

Indicators could include results of monitoring data, new information, or changed circumstances.

3. There is an alternative to the preceding step for areas designated as limited that cannot be completed during the RMP process because of one or more of the following constraints:
  - the existing situation involves especially complex or controversial travel management planning;
  - existing data are inadequate;
  - more time is needed than is available under the RMP planning schedule; or
  - sufficient funding is not available.

In these cases, develop a preliminary road and trail network, and establish a process to select a final road and trail network, normally at the implementation plan level. This work should be completed within 5 years. The outcome of this interim process should document the decision-making process used to develop the initial network, provide the basis for future management decisions, and help set guidelines for adaptive road and trail network adjustments throughout the life of the plan. These uncompleted areas should be identified in the RMP and the following tasks completed for each area:

- produce a map of a preliminary road and trail network;
  - define short-term management guidance for road and trail access and activities in areas or sub-areas not completed;
  - outline additional data needs, and a strategy to collect needed information;
  - provide a clear planning sequence, including public collaboration, criteria and constraints for subsequent road and trail selection and identification; and
  - provide a schedule to complete the limited area or sub-area road and trail selection process.
4. Develop guidance regarding the monitoring process in each RMP. An important component of the monitoring process is the development of specific management objectives, maintenance standards and other narrative guidance so that future management actions are consistent with desired standards.

### **Protests and Appeals**

The open, limited and closed area designations, and the criteria established for road and trail selection in areas designated as limited, will be considered RMP-level decisions and are protestable under the planning regulations at 43 CFR 1610. Selection and identification of the individual roads and trails within the system will be considered implementation-level decisions, and are appealable under 43 CFR Part 4, even when performed concurrently with the RMP.

### **Area Designation and Road/Trail Selection Process Recommendations**

To ensure consistent land use plan decisions for public access via mechanized and non-motorized/non-mechanized modes of travel, it is highly recommended that all Field Offices complete the following steps during land use plan development, revision or amendment.

1. Complete travel management planning, which should incorporate comprehensive travel management, in addition to making the required OHV decisions in land use plans. Comprehensive travel management involves proactive consideration of public access, resource management, and regulatory needs through land-use planning. It should incorporate consideration of access needs, effects of, and interactions among all forms of travel, including motorized; mechanized; and non-motorized/non-mechanized travel; equestrian and other livestock, walking, mountain bike, boat and other travel modes.
2. Provide specific guidance about the process of managing excepted motorized vehicle access for authorized, permitted or otherwise approved vehicles for those specific categories of motorized vehicle uses that are exempt from designation as off-highway vehicles (43 CFR 8340.0-5 (a) (1) through (5)).
3. Start travel management planning and the decision-making process by identifying desired future conditions at a landscape level. Determine the level of data and information needed for area designations and road and trail selections. Select and incorporate roads and trails into the transportation network according to the guidance established in the RMP.
4. Use road and trail inventory information from all available sources, including states, tribal governments, counties, other agencies, interest groups and individuals. This information is usually sufficient to enable the BLM to make the necessary OHV area designations in the RMP. Involving the public in the collection and analysis of transportation data can be an important factor in achieving transportation management goals.
5. Choose individual roads and trails, rather than using inherited roads and trails. Most existing roads and trails on public lands were created by use over time, rather than planned and constructed for specific activities or needs. Instead of a decision-making process to decide which individual roads and trails should be closed or left open, consider a broader range of possibilities for management of individual roads and trails, including reroutes, reconstruction or new construction, as well as closures. These are tools that should be used to develop a quality travel system. A well-designed travel system can direct travel away from sensitive areas, yet provide quality recreational activities and access for commercial and recreational needs.